

tive limitation. It is unlikely, however, that the excellent special collections on Lincoln, Napoleon I, or American poetry at Brown will be drastically reduced or that agreement on limitation of college and university libraries will be soon or easily reached.

Contradictory as it may seem, this very lack of definiteness and agreement makes the book of more than temporary interest and value. The library must be unsettled in a world of social confusion. The points of agreement reached independently indicate possible avenues of advance. Disagreement indicates more than one road to improvement.

It will not be popular to note that, while the potential social service of the library is well recognized, its necessary and often desirable limitation by general social conditions is not always as frankly admitted. Future depressions and diminishing interest in reading are quite possible. Plans for forced entrenchment should be in readiness by the most optimistic librarian even if not publicized or acted upon until unavoidable.

Librarians who do their own thinking will be ready to make these reservations. They will not mistake the occasional evangelistic outbursts for factual statements. Those who think by proxy will for the most part find the excess optimism more profitably stimulating than a similar excess of even plausible pessimism.—*Frank K. Walter, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.*

Vitalizing a College Library. B. Lamar Johnson. American Library Association, 1939. 122p. \$2.

MORE AND more the college library must be regarded in its relationship to the other educational divisions on the campus.

Librarians have recognized this, perhaps more keenly than professorial and administrative groups, and here and there a few bold spirits have, on occasions, made threatening gestures toward reform. At Stephens College, the administration, the library staff, and the teachers, recognizing the essential unity of library work and teaching, discarded conventional library practices for a program which would bring students, faculty, and books together and which would make it more nearly possible for the student to associate with books as in a private library. By establishing the dual position of librarian and dean of instruction, by employing in this position a man whose training, experience, and interest have been primarily in the field of teaching, and by securing a special foundation grant to conduct an experimental library program, the Stephens College administration set the stage for the library program described by Dr. Johnson in *Vitalizing a College Library*.

The library program described provides for decentralized service under centralized administration, for classroom libraries (languages and dramatics with modification of the plan in English and other humanities), division libraries (social study and science departmental libraries adjacent to teaching quarters under supervision of subject-librarian specialists), the use of the general library for informal student-teacher conferences as well as for formal class instruction, joint library-teacher responsibility in instructing students in the use of books and libraries, book collections in residence halls and in the infirmary, and for the encouragement and building up of student private libraries. The range of services commonly thought of in college library work has been expanded to include the circulation of

phonograph records and music scores, the loan of framed pictures for students' rooms, and the establishment of a visual education service for the loan and previewing of motion pictures for class work. Further elucidation of the program is unnecessary since most librarians are already familiar in a general way with the Stephens library program as interpreted in more than a dozen articles in library and educational journals.

The question naturally arises, since this is a case history of one particular library program, as to how useful the results of the study are to other librarians. The answer, in this reviewer's humble opinion, is that Dr. Johnson has made a valuable contribution to the whole subject of library-teaching relations. Every college librarian will find in it a stimulating, enlightening, and constructive analysis of one approach to a difficult and perplexing problem. The intellectual interests of students are, for the most part, a function of their mental development. In most colleges, undergraduate students receive their sharpest stimulus to learning in the scientific laboratory. Only in a very limited degree is there the same stimulating association in the humanities and social sciences to spark the interest of students. The physical provisions in most college libraries for just such stimulation are largely lacking. But there is every reason to believe that if an opportunity is provided, the results will be equally stimulating. This is what Stephens attempts to do.

On the other hand, the Stephens program is not the only approach to bridging the gap between the library and its relation to instruction, as Dr. Johnson would be the first to agree. His scheme of decentralizing the book collections in a small

college library is contrary to at least one librarian's notion that the unifying function of the college library should be an important fact in the interrelation of knowledge. Furthermore it hardly seems possible that advanced students could do any really serious investigation when library resources in the social sciences and humanities are so widely scattered and when only a skeleton collection remains in the main library. Dr. Johnson's slogan "Books All Around Them" brings to mind the remark of a Maine coast native. Asked whether he spent the long winter evenings in reading, he replied, "No! Reading is bad. Too much reading rots the mind." Too much reading of the quality singled out by Stephens' students as their first choice for recreational reading would probably rot the mind.

It is regrettable that the author should have adopted the methods of the comparative school in the chapter on "Administration and Records" where circulation and cost figures in the particular instance cited cannot be accepted as true criteria for measuring the library effectiveness of these institutions. In spite of these shortcomings, minor to be sure and permissible only as cavil among friends, Dr. Johnson has, by combining his sound teaching and library experience, succeeded in giving us a vastly suggestive and stimulating analysis of a successful college library experiment.—Guy R. Lyle, *Woman's College Library of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro.*

A Code for Classifiers. William Stetson Merrill. 2nd ed. American Library Association, 1939. 177p. \$2.

MR. MERRILL's second edition of his *Code for Classifiers* is a bona fide new edi-